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FIFTH TRIENNIAL CHARGE

TO THE

Clergy of the Protestant Episcopal Church,

IN THE

DIOCESE OF DELAWARE.

BY ALFRED LEE,
BISHOP OF THE DIOCESE OF DELAWARE.

Delivered at the Opening of the Convention of the Diocese, June 6, 1860.

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DEAR AND REVEREND BRETHREN:

As our Pastoral Life is broken into annual portions, and the reports required at each stated Convention remind us of the final account to be rendered to the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, so the more permanent and, if possible, more awfully responsible office of the Episcopate is measured in our canons by triennial divisions.

A triennial visitation of the Diocese is the least amount of Episcopal duty that can be accepted of its overseer, and although our Church recommends rather than requires a charge from her Bishops to the Clergy of their Dioceses once in three years, the recommendation appears to me to fall little short of an injunction. The suggestions now offered, in the spirit of fraternal counsel, will be mainly practical, and such as have impressed my own mind in the prosecution of our common work.

How often must we feel the forcible language of our Ordinal, "Forasmuch then as your office is both of so great excellency, and of so great difficulty." When we look at its excellency, its origin and design, its supports and consolations, its amazing results, and glorious rewards, if faithfully discharged, it appears unspeakably desirable, a most noble and adequate life-work. If we regard its difficulty, the holy and momentous trust, the eternal consequences, the sad and irremediable results of neglect or error, the obstacles in the way of success, and then our own insufficiency, our hearts sink and our knees tremble.

But we have put our hand to the plough and may not look back. The same urgent injunction is addressed to each one of us as to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received of the Lord that thou fulfil

it." But we know in whom we have believed, and who hath said, "My grace is sufficient for thee."

One source of difficulty, frequently and painfully felt, arises from conflicting claims incident to our work and diverse aspects of duty. We are drawn by different and opposing forces, impelled now in this direction and now in that. We have to be on our guard, not only against known sins and palpable temptations, but also against one-sided and partial views; against disproportionate attention to undeniable duties. We may become so engrossed in a particular aspect or department of our work as to overlook others not less necessary and important. While guarding one portion of the wall we may leave another undefended. As physical health consists in the perfect equipoise and harmonious balance of the various functions of the body, excess in any one implying derangement and weakness elsewhere, so ministerial efficiency is intimately connected with the just discharge of its multiform obligations and reconciliation of its antagonist demands.

When our Lord sent forth his Apostles as sheep in the midst of wolves, he gave them this significant and emphatic charge, "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves." Their mission was one of peace and good will. The burden of their message was love. To accord with so merciful and benevolent an errand—to shew to a world lying in wickedness the nature of that religion which was now proclaimed, theirs must be the dove-like spirit—blameless, gentle, affectionate, suffering with meekness, not rendering railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing. But then, also there was required of them prudence and discernment. Their gentleness was not to degenerate into imbecility. The work entrusted to them demanded manly energy, enlarged wisdom, careful discrimination, fitting adaptation of means to the end. It was not the work of children, but of mature and intelli-

gent men. Fearless in the path of duty, they were at the same time not to rush into needless dangers, neglect proper precautions, excite unnecessary prejudices, or awaken contempt where they might inspire respect. The combination of these apparently opposite dispositions—the union of guilelessness with prudence, of simplicity with penetration, of energy with mildness, of courage with gentleness, was to mark the Apostle of Christ. When we read the biography of such a man as Paul, we are at once struck with the beauty of this combination. The lion and the lamb, the serpent and the dove, blend in his admirable character. And a still higher example of felicitous union is afforded by the earthly life of Him who uttered this injunction.

Now the spirit of these words of Christ we ought, dear brethren, to extend throughout. Our Saviour strikes as it were a key note. His finger points to an indispensable requisite to ministerial efficiency. The combination of contrasted qualities—the reconciliation of distracting claims—the dove-tailing of apparent contradictions, is one part, and not the easiest, of our high calling. Such adjustment is only subordinate to those holy dispositions and spiritual affections, the faith, hope, charity, zeal, integrity and devotion, without which we are unbidden intruders into our sacred office. Let me now seek to apply the spirit of this injunction of our Lord to some of the particulars of ordinary ministerial life.

1. It is no easy thing for the minister to be at once the man of study and the man of action ; to attend at the same time to his own intellectual and spiritual needs, and to the various external claims made upon his attention. How much of time to devote to books, to composition and meditation, and how much to give to active labor, may often occasion perplexity.

The minister should do justice to himself. If his own

mind be starved, his flock will scarcely be fed. And unless the mind be nourished with fresh acquisitions, and stimulated by the thoughts and attainments of gifted intellects, it will stagnate and dwarfen. Even a thorough preparatory course will not obviate this necessity. We require the constant influx of light. We need to be continually imbibing the results of profound research, scholarly attainments and mature reflection, as well as the enlivening influences of sanctified imagination. We need frequent and familiar converse with the great and the good who instruct us by the printed page. Thus are we to be roused, stimulated, and invigorated. Our calling and our times alike demand capacity and culture from the ministry. And how vast a field is outspread before the mind! What treasures of knowledge and thought invite the student! There are the accumulated riches of the past—the productions of the master-minds in theological lore—the invaluable works of honored champions of the faith. There is a flood of new books constantly pouring from the press—many of which illustrate the word of God and assist the student of the lively oracles. Modern geographical and historical discoveries are elucidating the Scriptures, and answering the cavils of the objector. Then it is desirable that the minister should maintain some acquaintance with general literature and scientific progress, and not fall below the level of the well informed reading community. He would wish to some extent to know what is going on in the world at a juncture of peculiar interest, when many are running to and fro and knowledge is increased. He would wish also to know what is going on in the Church, to be conversant with the state of different Christian bodies, to inform himself of the nature and success of Missionary enterprise, and to be able to read the signs of the times and answer the enquiry that he may expect to hear, “Watchman, what of the night?”

As an officer in the Lord's host he would also desire to understand what is going on in the camp of the enemy, and to be able to meet the shifting assaults of a subtle and varying infidelity.

And there is the great and glorious Book—the Word of the living God—that volume which it is his special duty to interpret. What a life study is it? How inexhaustible a mine! How ever fresh and full a fountain! The more we explore its divine pages, the more we want to know of its riches of knowledge and grace. This we must study whatever else we omit. If to Timothy, the intimate companion of an inspired Apostle, it was enjoined "Give attendance unto reading," how much more forcibly is the like appeal made to us.

Urgent then is the inducement to the minister to be a man of study. But if he be entrusted with the cure of souls he must be no less a man of action. The furnishing and discipline of the mind is but a preliminary. His vocation is work, not literary leisure and seclusion. Converse with books ought to qualify him the better to deal with men. He reads and meditates that he may persuade, convince, instruct and guide. If he should be diligent in the pursuit of knowledge, it is that he may be wise to win souls. He acquires in order to impart. He lays up treasures that he may enrich others. The hours passed in the library are to tell upon the hearts and consciences and lives of men. He seeks to make the different branches of sacred and secular knowledge tributary to the great object of bringing sinners to the Saviour, and of edifying the Church. Whatever he does, he must always have in view practical results. It is not for curiosity, entertainment, or mere mental improvement that he studies, but that he may be an able minister of the new Testament, a persuasive and effective pleader for his Master. To be mainly occupied with books, and to neglect souls, would

be solemn trifling. It would be like polishing the weapon that was never used, or rigging the ship that should never leave the harbor or breast the wave.

But the question will be often a trying one to the conscientious minister, what proportion of his time and energies to allot to the one and to the other department: how to be at once diligent in the study, and energetic in the field. If he neglect mental culture his whole ministry feels the withering effect. He loses capacity and power and resources and impressiveness. If he slight the peculiar duties of his office, on account of his fondness for literary occupation, he fails again. Probably, situated as most of our clergy are, the temptation is stronger to neglect mental application than actual work. Duties press upon us importunately, and obtrude themselves upon our notice. But to be permanently useful and acceptable both claims must be regarded. The best security for attending faithfully to each will be to cherish a deep conviction of the blessedness and importance of our work. This will lead us to "redeem the time," and we have time enough if we husband it. Then we shall feel at once that hours are valuable, and that souls are precious. And while the closet witnesses our assiduous preparation, the vineyard of the Lord will not suffer from inattention or indifference.

2. In our actual work, which has just been contrasted with study and intellectual improvement, is comprehended the stated ministry of the word of God.

A like difficulty often meets us in the endeavor to do equal justice to the claims of the pulpit and of pastoral intercourse. The able minister of the New Testament is called to be at once the preacher and the pastor. His peculiar tastes and inclinations may incline him to one of these avocations rather than to the other. We find, not unfrequently, instances of special excellence in this branch

of duty joined with inferiority or negligence in the opposite. One minister is popular and interesting as a speaker. He delivers the gospel message with the recommendations of a noble rhetoric and becoming oratory. His sermons are rich, instructive and elaborate. But he is no pastor. His people see little of him except in church. He is not a frequent visitor in the cottage, in the sick room, and at the death-bed. He does not find himself at home in such scenes, he goes to them with reluctance, and grudges the time thus occupied as if it were so much taken from his proper and more congenial occupation.

His clerical neighbor is of an active disposition and spends his energies in going from house to house, seeking out those to whom his efforts will be a blessing, visiting the fatherless and widows in their affliction, carrying consolation to the mourner and warning to the sinner. This seems to him to be his paramount duty, and he may become so engrossed with it as to slight his pulpit preparations. They may cost him little, and as a natural consequence be worth little. While such a man will be loved and respected, his discourses will eventually become weak and tame, and stir little emotion in the hearts of his hearers. Now the object at which we should earnestly aim is to reconcile these sometimes conflicting duties.

We ought to give all the effect that we may to our publication of the message of God. The office of the Christian preacher is one of the noblest and most beneficial that men can exercise. To stand up before our fellow mortals as ambassadors for the King of kings, to proclaim the unsearchable riches of Christ, to direct dying men to Him who is the Way, the Truth and the Life; to bring divine truths and motives to bear upon the hearts and lives of men with all the sympathetic power of the kindling eye, the animated countenance, and the earnest pleading voice, this is a charge than which none higher can be devolved

upon a mortal. An angel is shewn us in the Apocalypse, flying through mid-heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach. And the Lord of angels came, in human form, to preach good tidings to the meek. Glorious indeed is this privilege, and who can measure the results, if it be faithfully and acceptably performed !

But how much depends upon the manner of performance ! It is comparatively easy to describe what a sermon should be, but to come up to the standard of excellence is anything but easy. That it should teach the truth, and nothing inconsistent with the truth, it would be superfluous to remark. It is only the truth as it is in Jesus that God will bless. But then a stated ministry is not to be satisfied with mere iteration, the stereotyped recital of orthodox words and phrases until it degenerates into a lifeless formula. Mental discipline, study and observation should impart variety, point and richness to familiar doctrines. The sermon should be instructive and full of matter without a parade of learning—clear and perspicuous in style—methodical without stiffness—simple and practical without being common-place and familiar—scriptural without being a mere rehearsal of texts—impressive without aiming at effect—fairly bringing out the meaning of the text without prolixity—inelligible to the uncultivated, and yet commanding the respect of the educated—doctrinal without being dry—practical without being a mere moral essay. Above all it should glow with the earnestness, solemnity and loving spirit of Christianity—with affectionate expostulation and close appeal. It should be sober, yet fervid—searching yet tender—blending the lofty rebuke of the prophet with the sweetness and unction of the evangelist. This is a style of composition fitted, indeed, to task severely the best capacity and noblest gifts. Yet something like this is expected of the parochial incumbent, not at rare intervals, but weekly, and it may be

two or three such productions a week. Such a tax might seem heavy enough to impose upon ordinary minds without any additional burden.

But the duties of the pastor must not be overlooked in those of the preacher. The good shepherd calleth his own sheep by name. Intercourse, of a frequent and unrestrained character, is essential to the production of that mutual and affectionate confidence which should subsist between the minister and his parishioners. Thus must the pastor become acquainted with the wants, the trials, the hindrances of his people. Each heart knows its own bitterness, its peculiar cares, difficulties and temptations, and we are bound, so far as we may, to meet these individual requirements. The pastor should be regarded by each member of his flock as a sympathizing friend and counsellor. Especially when the mind is first awakened to apprehend the great realities connected with soul-life and eternity, is the ready guidance and advice of the faithful and judicious minister of incalculable importance. Then too the sick and suffering, the indigent and afflicted, the bereaved and the dying have their special urgent claims. The Sunday School, the Bible Class, and other instrumentalities, are vital to parochial success. And there are few positions in which our ministers are not, to a greater or less degree, liable to extra parochial calls to visit the sick, bury the dead, and perform other duties to those who are not regular attendants in their churches.

The minister, whose heart is in his work, will oft-times feel as if these claims upon his time were distracting and excessive. But here self-denial and practical wisdom must be called into exercise. We must give ourselves with heart and energy to each class of duties. And while the right apportionment of time and attention may often try us sorely, we must find compensation in rendering these two departments mutually auxiliary. In truth they may

and should further, and not hinder each other. The confidential, affectionate intercourse of the pastor with his people gives a truer sympathy and more practical tone to the sermon. We discover in this way what instruction our parishioners need—what duties it is important to urge, what errors to expose, against what dangers to warn, and what impediments to remove. This knowledge is just what the preacher needs that he may not degenerate into the essayist or lecturer. He is to address living men, on all important topics, and this he can do most effectually when he understands what manner of men they are to whom he speaks. And sometimes it will be found that the teaching from house to house comes home to the soul with a power unfeigned in the sanctuary. The most promising charge is that which harmonizes the two branches of our office.

He who is at once evangelical, instructive, fervent and impressive in the pulpit—assiduous, affectionate and faithful in pastoral ministration, will not fail of precious fruits of his husbandry.

3. Another difficulty which we encounter is to unite in due measure tenderness with fidelity—affection with boldness.

We receive the injunction “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and doctrine.” We are as much bound to reprove and rebuke, as to exhort. Sin riots in every community, and we witness continually its blighting influences. Souls are perishing in their own corruption. The great adversary is reaping a vast harvest of ungodliness and death, even in the most favored regions. And even within the fold of Christ’s visible Church, exists a fearful amount of blindness, self-deception and inconsistency. It is the office of the Christian ministry to shew

men their transgressions, expose the deformity of sin, hold it up before men's eyes in the light of the blood-stained cross and the awful judgment. We must present, without concealment, the appalling consequences of unrepented and unforgiven sin, point impenitent transgressors to the worm that never dieth, and to the lake burning with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. And to the self-satisfied and secure, to those who hold the truth in unrighteousness, we must exhibit their true characters and condition. If when we see the sword coming we do not warn the wicked, his blood will be required at the watchman's hand. Can we be otherwise than decided and faithful under such responsibility?

We know too, from experience, that mere general denunciations have little effect. They pass by men like the wind. If we would awaken the conscience of the sinner, we must use great plainness of speech. We must put our finger upon the diseased spot. We must, if we can, bring men to stand in solitary accountability before their Maker, and constrain the sinner's own conscience to testify, "Thou art the man."

And yet we are to discharge this trying duty with kindness and affection, with tender consideration for the feelings of our auditors, speaking the truth in love. We are to avoid unnecessary offence or the exciting of needless prejudice. To be prudent, without being time-serving—to be discriminating and searching, without being harsh and rude—to be plain and pointed, without ceasing to be gentle and courteous—to awaken the dormant conscience, without profitless irritation—here is a difficulty of no small magnitude. We value the good opinions of our parishioners and fellow citizens. We shrink from wounding and displeasing them. But we have something else to do than to flatter them, or speak peace when there is no peace. We have our own responsibility to meet, and we

watch for souls as they that must give account. If we over-value popularity we stand in slippery places, for the fear of man bringeth a snare. Surely in this aspect of our work we need, as our Saviour charged, to be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

Our Church has been characterized by remarkable discretion in avoiding complicity with questions of public strife. Her ministers have carefully avoided being drawn away from the high and holy office of Evangelists to be the mouth-piece of political rancor, and have not allowed agitating secular topics to crowd out of the pulpit the comfortable Gospel of Christ. Their aim has been to be governed by the safe guide of Apostolic example. The fruits of this wise and conciliatory course are evident in the general confidence wherewith our Church is regarded. Whenever her ministers do, therefore, utter their voice of rebuke, it will be done with heightened effect. And sin any where, whether in high or low, in public bodies or in private individuals, is deserving of faithful rebuke. The vices of men in exalted station, and measures of public iniquity are most disastrous in their influence upon the interests of religion and upon the souls for which Christ died. Our Church teaches us, in the collect for John Baptist's day, to pray that, after the example of that intrepid denouncer of the sins of the great, "we may constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake." We are not to shrink from reprobating vice because gilded with wealth and power, or from delivering the testimony of God against public immorality.

Yet is ours pre-eminently a mission of love. "The servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle towards all men, in meekness instructing them that oppose themselves." We entreat rather than threaten, remonstrate rather than denounce. And on ordinary occasions, as

well as in special emergencies, we need that divine wisdom and Christ-like spirit which will make us faithful to the souls of men, and to the great cause of Christianity, without being other than meek, conciliating, affectionate, and judicious.

4. I beg your attention to another point that often occasions anxiety as well as practical difficulty—the union of firm adherence to our own Church with genuine and enlarged Christian charity: to be at once heartily devoted to the welfare and prosperity of our particular Communion, and yet to cherish and manifest fraternal kindness to disciples of the same Lord, and believers in the same heaven-sent religion.

I need not occupy time to shew that one who ministers in the holy offices of our Church should be animated by a heartfelt and earnest attachment, and promote her true interests with enlightened and fervent zeal. To him is largely confided the reputation and welfare of his Church, and from him may be reasonably required a sincere and cordial preference for her doctrines and principles. We are to promote Christianity, not as an abstraction, but as embodied in the seemly drapery of creed, worship and sacraments. With true affection and unwearied solicitude we should cling to and study to advance our own Communion.

While this devotion should be a fixed and cherished principle, there is very much in the character of the Church itself to foster and strengthen an enlightened and fervent zeal. Her ministers, with years and experience, imbibe a higher estimate of her structure and spirit.—Their confidence in her purity of doctrine, manner of worship, and adaptation to the spiritual wants of men grows stronger. This is not of necessity the sect-spirit, singling out this or that body for its home, and then giving it a selfish and partisan devotion, but it is founded on the

recognition of marked features of resemblance to the Apostolic model, and the belief that her members enjoy peculiar advantages and privileges. We find ourselves connected with the fervor and faith of the earliest ages.—Our church is a legacy from men who witnessed for Christ at the stake and in the amphitheatre. The words in which we worship, the creeds which we recite, and the hymns in which we adore the blessed Trinity, have been from century to century the outpouring of Christian hearts. Our Church commends herself to us as uncorrupt in faith, Catholic in standards, rich in liturgical treasures, liberal in her comprehensive spirit. For the promotion of her growth and peace it is a privilege to labor or to suffer.

The warm-hearted Episcopalian cannot therefore but desire to extend the borders of his Zion. He would bestow upon his fellow men a great benefit in giving them privileges so precious to himself. His Church seems to him to be just what this unquiet age needs, stable and conservative, yet evangelical, fervent, and expansive.

Surrounding Christianity appears to require just that fixedness, sobriety, solemnity, reverence, calm earnestness, elevated devotion, and true Catholicity which she breathes. Amid the lamentable divisions that distract Protestants, which give such occasion for cavil to infidelity, and afford Rome such a vantage ground, she seems to present the true rallying point ; the broad scriptural platform on which the various Communions, agreeing in great gospel truths, might come together in the spirit of early Christianity. He cannot but hope that she is reserved by God for a great and noble destiny, and shall yet prove a source of unnumbered blessings to our land. It is not strange that the servant of such a Church, the child of such a mother, should give his heart and his energies to her advancement. Neither is it surprising if in his zeal he forget other considerations that equally deserve his regard.

These considerations, my Rev. brethren, while they need not lessen our filial attachment and devotion, may prevent them from running into narrowness and uncharitableness. Sectarian bigotry, when we are its objects, strikes us as peculiarly unlovely and repulsive. The fact that we believe our own Church to be primitive and pure, or that we sincerely suppose ourselves to be in the right in controverted points, is no security that our partiality may not degenerate into the same uncharitableness, which, exhibited toward ourselves, awakens our disgust and aversion. And, certainly, if these are the feelings which we awaken in the breasts of those who differ from us, there is not much prospect of our commanding to their approval and acceptance the doctrines and usages which we represent. In the question between the Jews and the Samaritans the former were clearly in the right, and yet how odious the spirit manifested by the Jews in our Saviour's day towards their less favored neighbors.

We are not only Churchmen but Christians. We have a connection which we highly value with our own household, but we are part of a wider and more comprehensive fraternity, even of that great family in heaven and earth of which God is the reconciled Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ the elder brother and the Head. This great society, so far as it is militant here upon earth, the Communion of Saints, the blessed company of all faithful people, has its high and paramount claims. True affection to the Saviour will not look with aversion upon the saved. "Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." "We know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren." And who are our brethren? All who are Christ's brethren. All who bear his name and evidence his spirit. "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." If predilection for our own Church incapacitate us from

joining in this Apostolic benediction, it is carried beyond due bounds. It is impairing charity, and eating out the vitals of Christian sympathy and brotherly kindness.

When, for example, our zeal is carried so far as to deny that Christian bodies, which hold the substance of the faith, are any part of the Church of Christ; when we exclude them from God's covenanted mercies, because they are without the Episcopal fold; deny the reality of their sacraments, and the validity of their ministrations, we fall, I am persuaded, into this error. I cannot find that our own Church has ever assumed this ground, or sanctioned this spirit. I find nothing in her standards to warrant such statements, and it scarcely admits of doubt that such were not the sentiments of the great and good men who settled her articles and formularies at the time of the Reformation.

The eminent Reformers, as well as many of the most illustrious English divines of later periods, repeatedly acknowledged the Protestant Communions of the continent as sister Churches, and held with them fraternal correspondence. Ministers of the continental Communions were allowed for a considerable time to hold cures in England, and were employed as missionaries by the English Church Societies until a comparatively recent period. The champion of our Ecclesiastical Polity, Hooker, contended against the principle that the particular form of Church government is absolutely and in all cases essential, for this was the ground then taken by his Puritan antagonists. "The exclusive dogma was comparatively unknown in the Church of England until the time of Archbishop Laud. Of the whole succession of Archbishops of Canterbury, and Primates of all England, none have ever maintained it except Laud, and perhaps, Potter."

On this point the fathers, who were chiefly engaged in

the arrangement of our own Protestant Episcopal Church, did not differ from the English Reformers. No doubt there were then as now differences of opinion, but it is difficult to reconcile the language of the preface to our Prayer Book with the denial of a Church character to orthodox Communions around us. "When in the course of Divine Providence these American States became independent with respect to civil government, their ecclesiastical independence was necessarily included, and the different religious denominations were left at full and equal liberty to model and organize their respective Churches, and forms of worship and discipline, in such manner as they might judge most convenient for their future prosperity." In the interpretation of this language, if it be ambiguous, the known views of Bishop White are entitled to more weight than those of any other individual. He thus speaks in his charge of 1832. "With deep solicitude for sustaining the integrity of our Church in this matter, there is not perceived the necessity of carrying it to the extreme of denouncing all communions destitute of the Episcopacy as departing from the essentials of the Christian faith and as aliens from the covenants of promise. The deliverer of this present charge is rather disposed to adopt the sentiments of an able and learned Archbishop of Canterbury, (Dr. Wake), where he says, in a letter to an eminent foreign divine, "Far be it from me such an obdurate heart, as that because of this defect, (the want of Episcopacy,) I should say of some Churches that they are to be cut off from our communion, or should pronounce, with over ardent writers among us, that they have no valid sacraments and are scarcely Christian."

Bishop Hopkins, in the second of his "Letters on the Novelties," (published in 1844) shows with his usual force and clearness, that the exclusion of non-Episcopal bodies, holding the great truths of the gospel, from the Church of

Christ, has never been sanctioned by our mother Church or our own. He says, "Not only do the orthodox Churches of our non-Episcopal brethren agree with us in the general truths and ordinances of the gospel, but we know that a certain measure of fraternal association has always existed amongst the members; nor is there to this hour a single act, law or rule, either on their part or on ours, which forbids their ministry or people from sharing as often as they will in our Communion." (Letter 2, p. 77.) "None of them have denounced us nor have we denounced them as cut off from the body of the Church Universal. Our Christian fellowship has been more or less according to times and circumstances, but it has never been severed by any sentence of anathema."

Fidelity to our own principles and attachment to our Communion do not therefore impose upon us a hostile attitude towards our fellow Christians. We may, while conscientiously adhering to our own views of divine truth and primitive order, and to our manner of worship, rejoice in all the good which they accomplish in the breaking down the kingdom of sin, Satan and death, and in the turning of sinners to God. If through their zeal and energy Christ is preached and souls are saved, we therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice. Far be it from us to look with an envious or suspicious eye upon the triumphs of God's word faithfully preached, or to depreciate and disparage the fruits of the Spirit, because the trees of righteousness, on which they are growing, flourish in another part of the Lord's vineyard. It is a serious, I should not go beyond my own convictions if I say it is a fearful thing, to repudiate the effects of that Holy Spirit, whose stamp and impress upon the life and character are so marked, and whose fertilizing dews manifestly descend upon other fields than our own. Far better for our prosperity and growth, as well as for our soul's peace, to emulate the

earnestness, zeal and love that are gathering rich harvests from the great world-field.

When that which may be held as a private opinion is pressed as if it were a fundamental gospel truth, and made a test of loyalty and attachment to our own Communion, we shall be ourselves the sufferers. Our Zion, instead of being a city at unity in itself, will be distracted with internal strife, and appear any thing but a desirable shelter to those who are seeking a peaceful spiritual home. We shall unfairly represent our own principles, materially weaken our influence for good, and hinder the advancement of our beloved Church in an age and land of intelligence and liberality. And we may thus seriously obstruct the blessed consummation of union among all Christians who hold the great saving verities of the gospel. The House of Bishops, in 1856, appointed a commission on Christian unity, as an indication of their earnest desire that the wounds and breaches among Christians should be healed. But it is vain to expect any cordial response to such an overture so long as those to whom it is extended, and to whom our doctrinal standards are unobjectionable, find themselves regarded as aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise.

Let us cherish and manifest the spirit of brotherly kindness and Christian sympathy towards all who call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours, and we shall most effectually promote the great object of oneness among the followers of our divine Master, the object for which he so earnestly prayed. Thus shall we carry out that part of our Ordination Vow which binds us to "set forwards quietness, peace and love among all Christian people," as well as among those who are confided to our particular care. Thus shall we live in the spirit of that prayer, so constantly uttered, "for the holy Church universal," (in the English book it is expressed "for the good

estate of the Catholic Church,") "that all who profess and call themselves Christians may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life." In this spirit we may labor faithfully and diligently for the enlargement of our own Apostolic Communion, and at the same time live in brotherly love with those, whom, if we are so blessed as to reach heaven, we may well expect to find there. The Evangelist will not sink into the proselyte, nor the Church be presented as an intolerant sect, rather than as a charitable, inviting and Catholic fold.

I have spoken, dear brethren, with that unreserve and plainness demanded by our mutual relation, and the grave responsibilities of our joint stewardship. It has seemed to me clearly a duty to express my opinion upon points that cannot be ignored in our actual ministry. While thus feeling myself bound to state to those, over whom the Holy Ghost hath made me overseer, my convictions of truth without concealment, I desire so to do with entire respect, forbearance and brotherly kindness to those who may differ from me.

"Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen."

COLLECT.

O Almighty God, who hast knit together thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical body of thy Son Christ our Lord; grant us grace so to follow thy blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which thou hast prepared for those who unfeignedly love thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

